UNITED
NATIONS

EP

UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

UNEP

Seventeenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points

Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 May 2025

Agenda Item 4: **Progress report on the implementation of SPA/RAC activities under the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for the biennium 2024-2025**

SPA/RAC Communication Strategy

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF SPA/RAC

For bibliographic purposes, this document may be cited as:
UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC, 2025. Communication strategy of SPA/RAC.

The communication strategy has been prepared by ACTEON for SPA/RAC.

Cover:
Original design by Farah Allegue

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF SPA/RAC

Table of contents

1. Communication strategy, operational plan: definitions

A communications strategy and an operational plan are two complementary but distinct elements of a global communications approach:

Communication strategy 2025 - 2027:

- It defines the general framework for communication actions through long-term objectives and strategic orientations.
- It identifies the key messages, target audiences, and communication axes to be developed to achieve the objectives set by the organization.
- Strategy is often based on an analysis of the issues and the context (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), and establishes a clear vision of the added value and direction that communication will take.

Operational plan 2025:

- This is the concrete implementation of the strategy. This plan describes in detail who will do what, when, and how to translate the strategy into measurable actions.
- The operational plan includes a schedule of actions, assigned responsibilities, a budget, and indicators to assess the effectiveness of each action.
- For example, an operational plan will specify the frequency of publications on social networks, the events to be organized, the media to be created, etc., to achieve strategic objectives.

In short, the communications strategy provides a vision and overall objectives, while the operational plan focuses on the logistics and organization of day-to-day actions to implement this strategy.

2. Summary

In addition, we've prepared a **visual summary,** making it easy to visualize the various elements of the strategy and plan. The PDF version of the summary is available here : Link to the infographic

3. Diagnostic

A Diagnostic has been carried out, highlighting SPA/RAC's strengths & weaknesses, and outlining several possible directions for improving its communication: here is a summary of the main areas of work:

1. Quality & formats

- o **Quality:** maintain the current level of content quality
- o **Modern format:** how to add value to exhaustive & scientific information through short formats

2. Internal structuring

- o **Set up internal processes**: list actions for the year, set up a communication calendar, anticipate to avoid emergency management and improve internal collaboration. Create a regular team meeting. Communication is a tool at the service of projects, which must become strategic in the eyes of SPA/RAC members.
- o **Setting up external processes**: creating reusable processes to reach local targets in the Mediterranean through focal points and SPAMIs
- o **Resources**: integrate communication funding issues into the strategy by developing specific funding lines for each project.
- o **Animation resource**: integrate into the strategy the recruitment of a human resource to manage the animation of the target network: SPAMI manager, SPAMI residents, focal points and Mediterranean residents.

3. Centre positioning

- o **Clarify the message**: Propose a concise message that enhances the SPA/RAC's mission, simplifying communication linked to complex protocols, and making communication more accessible to non-scientific Mediterranean targets: create a slogan for the 40th anniversary & for the centre: La Méditerranée, c'est l'Homme.
- o **Contextualize**: Always go back to why it's important to protect the Mediterranean: fishing, climate change...
- o **Visual positioning & iconography**: promote the message that the Mediterranean is people, through an aesthetic that includes people, while retaining the marine iconographic universe.

4. Focus targets and objectives

- o **Target definition**: Focus communication on three main groups:
  - a. **Mediterranean**: Coastal residents, young coastal residents, socio-professionals who use the sea, local elected officials, decision-makers (senior officials, MPs, environment ministers), MPA / SPAMI residents.
  - b. **Institutions**: SPA/RAC members, UNEP/MAP centres, SPA/BD focal points, SPAMI managers, AGEM members, UNEP.

  c. **Partners**: Scientists, biodiversity centres: IUCN Med, The MedFund, WWF Med, MedPAN and others, financiers: donors, sponsors.
- **Definition of objectives by target (to be worked on):**
  a. Disseminate knowledge in the field, capitalize on the local network to promote conservation objectives among coastal stakeholders, collaborate, understand.
  b. Encourage network collaboration: between UNEP centres and other biodiversity centres, find ways to avoid competing for funding, focus on each other's expertise, complement each other. Strengthen dialogue and achievements with countries on the implementation of MPAs. Promote best practices. Be an interesting & rewarding vector of visibility for focal points.
  c. Involve partners, understand donors' needs to raise funds for actions & communication
  d. General objectives: better coordination, better financing, better outreach, better awareness, better restoration.

5. Assessment and prioritization of actions

- **Evaluate the performance of actions to be able to prioritize**: Set up qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure the impact of communication actions and adjust according to the results. Use evaluation results to prioritize the most effective actions.
- **Prioritize**: choose the action most likely to achieve the set objectives.

6. Capitalizing on 40th anniversary
- As a **springboard for the visibility of** SPA/RAC actions,
- As a channel for acquiring financing.

4. SPA/RAC communication stakes

In light of the elements identified during the diagnosis, the communication challenges can be listed as follows:

Stake 1 **Measuring impact, capitalizing on the knowledge generated to better communicate the centre's objectives**

Our study reveals that communication around SPA/RAC's actions is an essential vector of success. We propose to make the effective integration of communication into the management of the centre's projects a priority, by systematically measuring the impact of the actions carried out, by capitalizing on the knowledge produced by the centre to identify its added value, and by setting up meeting times during which this knowledge and these impacts can be described, written down and shared in the most effective way with the targets of our communications. Implementation of internal processes, reflection on internal leadership and team involvement, and onboarding of new team members. Development of a language and formats adapted to new communication targets, to expend the reach beyond the usual inner circle.

Stake 2 **Disseminate knowledge in the field and report on usage.**

Capitalize on the local network to promote conservation and sustainable management objectives to coastal stakeholders, collaborate and understand. The conservation actions undertaken by the centre and its partners must be promoted in the field. The socio-economic aspects arising from the protection of species and environments are crucial elements in the narrative to be developed on the impact of man, positive & negative. This issue is directly reflected in the "Mediterranean" target described below, and transcribed through strategic axis 2 and its operational sub-objectives.

Stake 3 **Promote network collaboration**

Between UNEP centres and biodiversity centres, find ways not to compete for funding, but to draw on each other's expertise and complement each other. Strengthen dialogue and achievements with countries on the implementation of MPAs. Promote best practices. Be an interesting & rewarding vector of visibility for focal points.

Stake 4 Involving external partners

Understand the needs of financial backer, sponsors and other financiers to be identified for actions & communication. Understand the needs of local and national elected representatives in Mediterranean countries outside the focal points.

Targets & Stakes map

5. Targets

The 2015 communications strategy had identified several targets, without specifying the level of information each of these targets needs, resulting in a semantics very much tied to the institution.

These targets need to be re-evaluated at N+1, in order to precisely identify the most promising targets and define actions specifically aimed at them.

The diagnosis established three sets of priority targets. This segmentation resulted from the need to adapt the vocabulary used, the story format and the information to be highlighted. We thus chose to focus on the following groups:

Mediterraneans

Inhabitants, exclusive or not, temporary or permanent, of Mediterranean countries. This target group is considered to be "outside the SPA/RAC network". It may include:

 a. Coastal residents
 b. Young coastal dwellers
 c. Socioprofessional users of the sea
 d. Local elected officials
 e. Decision-makers (senior officials, members of parliament, environment ministers)
 f. MPA/SPAMI residents

Objective: raise awareness to improve the impact of conservation actions, transforming Mediterraneans into agents of change

Semantic: vulgarized semantics, educational in content and approach.

Key messages: this set of targets responds to content linked to the needs of a **territory** and the people who live there, and will focus on the stories of the inhabitants, the link with the sea, economic use, climate change, the loss of biodiversity and its direct economic impact, environmental education, the promotion of actions carried out in the country, and victories.

Language: local language

Method and resources: communication by a relay resource identified as the focal points & SPAMI managers. Production of vulgarized content on conservation actions and their socio-economic benefits, facilitation of a network of local stakeholders by the SPA/RAC, transfer of best practices, promotion of success stories.

Institutions

Members of the SPA/RAC network, this target group is considered easy to reach because they are already familiar with the SPA/RAC network and are used to working together:

a. SPA/RAC members
b. UNEP/MAP components
c. SPA/BD focal points
d. SPAMI managers
e. AGEM members
f. UNEP

Objective: improve collaboration to extend the visibility and impact of conservation actions

Semantics: everyday language

Key messages: make the complementary nature of our actions visible, encourage collaboration, enhance the value of our methods by communicating with this target group, such as using local offices as relays, using international networks as visibility relays, continuing to develop relationships based on trust, developing work processes, developing habits of collaboration.

Language: English, French

Method and resources: through the website, newsletters (UNEP, MAP...), the development and use of specific collaboration platforms (such as SPAMI), create a universe of cooperation to break out of specific bubbles and adopt a "systems" approach. Promote the interconnection of struggles. Selection of test countries to create and animate a network of local partners. Animate the network of stakeholders.

Partners outside the network

Partners outside the direct network, who are more difficult to contact, require dedicated actions.

a. Scientists
b. Biodiversity centres: IUCN Med, The MedFund, WWF Med, MedPAN and others
c. Financial: backers, sponsors, foundations

Objective: understand needs in order to anticipate, enhance the value of expertise and increase funding for conservation initiatives that need it.

Semantics: usual language, scientific terms, vulgarized explanation of the centre's positioning, missions and roles, and above all the impact of its actions, at local and regional levels.

Key messages: promote the approach and quality, attract talent and requests for collaboration/action, explain the UNEP/MAP structure, the centre's role, missions and impact.

Languages: English, French

Method and resources: through the website, a targeted newsletter, a specific collaboration platform and dedicated communication aimed at these sub-targets with tailored messages.

6. The main themes of communication (messages)

As far as priority themes are concerned, it seems necessary to go beyond the classic themes on which a marine biodiversity centre is generally expected to focus. We need to break out of the SPA/RAC comfort zone, and the circles in which our contacts are already convinced.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of themes identified during the scoping and diagnostic phase, which can be used to diversify the way in which the work themes are approached:

a. Environments and species: by extracting from the various scientific studies the salient facts about interconnections, victories, reconquests, etc. that will leave a lasting impression on people's minds.
b. Man's role in biodiversity loss
c. The role of man in protecting and restoring biodiversity
d. Supporting the realization that everyone is an agent of change
e. The role and importance of SPA/RAC,
f. SPA/RAC missions and actions. In particular, work on the vulgarization of scientific programs, to share the issues with target audiences and get them involved.
g. The complex systems in place and their vulgarization: certain terms need to be clarified so that they can be understood by all target groups.
h. The role and importance of marine protected areas: the needs of SPAMI, the solution implemented, the challenges, the victories
i. People living on the Mediterranean coast: their perspectives, their needs, uses of the sea in relation to conservation issues
j. Climate change: observation through the SPAMI "exceptional zones", impact on socio-economic activities.
k. The role of women in these changes concerning biodiversity & socio-economic impacts
l. Ecosystem services
m. Alerts
n. Best practices

7. Strategic directions & objectives 2025 - 2027

The strategic axes enable us to respond operationally to the challenges identified above. They are broken down into sub-objectives to be defined:

There are 4 thematic areas and a cross-functional area linked to processes. Each strategic axis is linked to specific targets.

Transversal strategic axis: impact measurement, knowledge transfer and communication processes

Strategic objective: to integrate into all projects a dimension of impact, sharing, capitalization and a direct link with the centre's communications. Involve teams to convince them of the importance of the approach. This axis is entirely focused on structuring internal processes and methods.

Operational sub-objectives:

1A - Include impact measurements in all studies

- Include a budget line for measuring the impact of an action in project proposals, tenders and partnerships. As a reminder, impact is measured as the effect around the result.
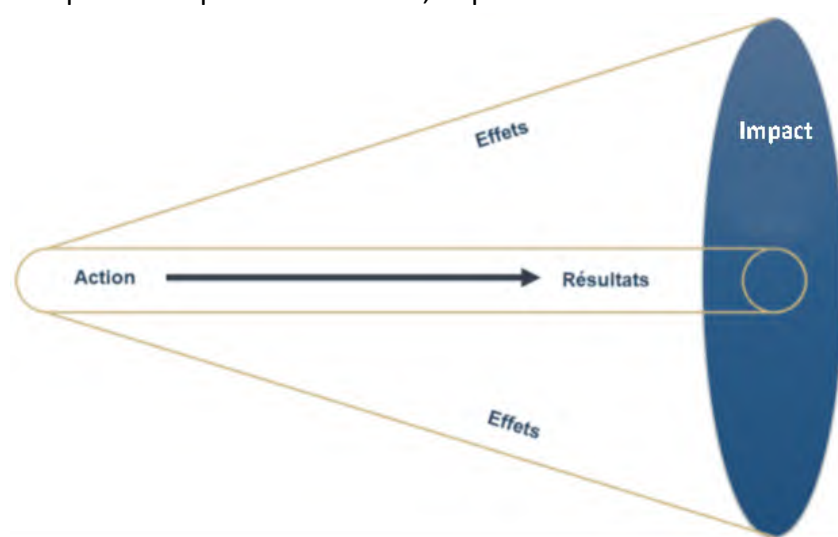
- Carry out these studies in-house to gain an understanding of how to measure socio-economic and ecological impact.
- Consider how to integrate software solutions to facilitate the integration of impact measurements.

- Integrate the notion of evaluating communication actions according to the main principles of impact measurement to be developed:
  - Result: did you achieve your overall objectives?
  - Indicator specific to the communication tool reflecting the target audience
  - Qualitative or quantitative measurements (see Appendix 3)
  - The indicator must be comparable over time (in particular before and after the action) and, if possible, with other relevant findings.
  - Allocate sufficient resources to the measures, be realistic in terms of impact measurement and time commitment
  - Create an action tracking grid
  - To be sustainable over time, the evaluation must cover the entire action and not just a single stage. For example, evaluate the overall communication campaign for the success of SPAMI Days, including the various tools used: Statue, webinar, social network posts.

1B - Take the time to transfer knowledge and capitalize on it

- The director organizes 3 meetings a year to coordinate biodiversity knowledge transfer projects:
  - Reflect on the centre's cross-cutting themes and how to derive added value from the SPA/RAC's specific actions.
  - Reflecting on gaps in knowledge
  - Making knowledge accessible
- Onboarding: passing on this new practice to new arrivals, drafting a guide or charter.

1C - Integrate communication into all project processes, even when outsourcing is necessary

- General principle that every project under construction, in progress or in completion must be communicated in a way that enhances its value.
- **Communication outsourcing for major projects**: for large-scale projects in which the SPA/RAC is the communication lead, outsourcing of a communication strategy for the duration of the project, including operational interventions by the SPA/RAC. Management of operational aspects by the service provider.
- Use communication as a means of explaining the structure of the centre's work: start from the specific and extend to the general. A highly technical project on an expert subject can serve as a starting point for the centre's general action.

1D - Strengthen resource mobilization and management

- Set up monitoring tools, including indicators for evaluating actions, and time dedicated to content creation and dissemination, to enable us to evaluate successful actions, and identify areas where efforts can be stepped up through internal recruitment or external one-off or permanent reinforcement.
- Offer in-house training solutions for employees wishing to develop their skills in outreach, impact measurement, knowledge transfer and facilitation.

1E - Develop adapted formats and languages for more impactful communication

- Create easy-to-understand communication materials adapted to new target audiences (beyond the usual partners), including visual formats, infographics and videos for better comprehension.
- Adapt the tone and vocabulary to get away from the "entre-soi" and make it easier for the Mediterranean target audience to understand, by emphasizing the socio-economic impacts of SPA/RAC actions, when the information is available.
- Evaluate and adjust messages and formats based on feedback from the target audience, to guarantee ever more relevant communication.

1F Developing adapted formats and languages for more inclusive communication

- Connect the SPA/RAC strategy to that of the MAP on the use of inclusive language.
- Find levers for greater inclusiveness in the targets reached by SPA/RAC communications.

1G Communication processes, meetings, sharing results

- Ongoing communication within the centre: dedicate monthly communication time to communication, prepare concise agendas targeted around a topic. No more than 1 hour of meeting time. When debates are not productive or take too long, suggest settling the subject in a working group.
- Target the people involved in certain topics to keep meeting attendance relevant. Prefer working groups of less than 5 people. For larger groups, provide a facilitator to facilitate collaborative work.
- Communication at the end of a project/action: systematize the sharing of results or end-of-study results by sending an e-mail to the whole team.
- Communication at the start of a project: systematize information on the launch of a partnership or project.

- Use of existing communication tools, such as Teams, to facilitate the transmission of information.
- Codify internal communication through simple rules to be applied by staff, organize Team Buildings, plan coaching sessions so that good internal communication practices become reflexes.
    - ➔ *This work can be carried out during animation sessions*

Priority targets:

- **SPA/RAC members**

> **Monitoring and evaluation:**
>
> - Planning and follow-up of 3 biodiversity meetings
> - Involvement of teams in the centre's communication around their project
> - Team knowledge of the strategy
> - Organization of 10 meetings with a project manager over 2025, regardless of the level of progress of a project or action, to assess the impact of an action, share/vulgarize knowledge to other players, integrate communication in a general way into dedicated project processes over 2025.
> - Measurement in 2026: a third of projects have an impact measurement financed in 2026, 100% of communication actions coordinated by SPA/RAC are managed by an external service provider for large-scale projects.
> - Monitoring of coordination processes via reporting tools and internal feedback.
> - Regular assessment of financial and human requirements for projects, with adjustments based on priorities.
> - Analysis of feedback from new communication formats to adapt tone and media on an ongoing basis, and ensure greater inclusiveness.

This cross-functional strategy aims to solidify the operational foundations of the SPA/RAC, in order to respond to today's challenges in a more coordinated, visible and inclusive way, while ensuring greater impact for all stakeholders.

Strategic axis 2: Disseminate knowledge in the field and provide feedback on usage

Strategic objective: Capitalize on the local network to promote and reinforce conservation objectives among Mediterranean coastal stakeholders, working together to enhance and adapt the conservation actions undertaken by the SPA/RAC centre and its partners.

Operational sub-objectives:

2A - Promote local conservation initiatives and their ecological impact:

- Create and disseminate content that illustrates the concrete results of actions to protect marine and coastal species and environments, highlighting collaborations with local stakeholders.
- Develop communication materials showing the socio-economic and ecological benefits of conservation for local communities.
- Organize awareness campaigns and local events with partners to illustrate the success of conservation projects.
- Create a press release to be distributed locally when local events are organized. Rely on local partners for this dissemination, encouraging journalists to be approached periodically to bring conservation to life at a local level. Don't forget the time factor and exposure to information when accepting restrictions linked to conservation actions.

2B - Strengthen collaboration with coastal stakeholders:

- Facilitate training workshops and co-construction sessions with protected area managers and coastal zone managers.
- Set up regular working groups between the SPA/RAC centre and local stakeholders to gather their perceptions and develop appropriate practices.
- Promote partnerships and collaborative projects with non-governmental organizations, associations and local institutions.
- Enhancing links with focal points and local stakeholders.

2C - Develop a socio-economic narrative around conservation actions:

- Identify and analyse the positive and negative socio-economic impacts of conservation to build a balanced discourse.
- Write case studies and reports on the social and economic benefits of conservation work, for local decision-makers and managers.

- Incorporate testimonials from local players and socio-economic data to raise awareness of the implications of sustainable development and the preservation of natural environments.
- Disseminate these stories to identified press partners with a territorial link to the story being developed, to reach a wider target audience.
  This objective is linked to the establishment of a "local press network" through institutional partners.

2D - Capitalize on existing actions to strengthen dialogue between institutions, regional partners and other stakeholders:

- Promote the communication strategy to institutions and partners, and its link with conservation objectives. Take the time to present the present strategy, to support the need to finance impact and knowledge transfer measures.
- Capitalize on the MPA Forum, open to all MPA stakeholders (every 4 years) to disseminate best practices.
- Dedicate preparation time to collaboration at various symposia on marine habitats, birds and non-native species, open to all stakeholders (every 4 years or so).
- Include in SPAMI Day a time dedicated to disseminating the impact of conservation actions in the field - every 2 years face-to-face, if not every year -.
- Set up a working group dedicated to collaboration between centres and focal points, focusing on monitoring and communicating progress.
- Develop internal communication tools to facilitate the sharing of strategic information and best practices.

Priority targets:

- **Mediterranean stakeholders:** local decision-makers, protected area managers, NGOs, local authorities.
- **Coastal communities:** local residents, fishers, farmers and businesses directly dependent on natural resources.
- **Public institutions and regional partners:** Ministries of the Environment, national environmental agencies and funding organizations.

Monitoring and evaluation:

- Evaluate the impact of awareness campaigns (number of participants, feedback).

- Analyse the impact of training and co-construction projects on local practices.

- Monitor the socio-economic impact of conservation actions using regional impact indicators and target surveys.

- To be completed with feedback from animation activities

This strategic axis helps to strengthen the link between SPA/RAC's conservation actions and the needs of local populations, creating ongoing dialogue and synergies for lasting impact.

Strategic axis 3: Strengthen collaboration within the UNEP Network and with other biodiversity centres

Strategic objective: Facilitate reinforced and complementary collaboration between biodiversity centres and UNEP centres, by optimizing expertise, harmonizing funding efforts, and promoting joint advances in the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) and the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity.

Operational sub-objectives:

3A - Optimize complementarity and reduce competition:

- Develop a map of the specific skills of each biodiversity centre to better guide funding applications and collaborations. Following the meetings held to identify the added value of the SPA/RAC, we propose to circulate a questionnaire to all the targets identified for this objective to list everyone's skills, as well as reference subjects, so as to build up a precise database of each centre's thematic fields. This sub-objective is currently being developed through a digital tool: a directory of experts and institutions working on biodiversity, fed by a link sent to partners.
  This task requires a dedicated resource
- Create a guide or frame of reference for the division of tasks and complementarity of expertise between centres: following circulation of the first questionnaire, organize a meeting with a few key people, to lay the foundations for this cooperation and a set of principles such as: consultation of centres on their areas of expertise, consortium response, transfer of knowledge from one centre to another...
  This task requires a dedicated resource

- Introduce biannual meetings to align financing strategies, avoid duplication and reinforce synergies.
  This task requires a dedicated resource

3B - Enhance joint achievements and promote best practices:

- Creation of fact sheets or brochures that summarize and popularize 1 or more documents/studies at a time, making them accessible and useful to MPA managers.
- Create an online space dedicated to MPA success stories and the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity, featuring testimonials, videos and infographics on effective practices.
- Develop a series of best practice sheets on collaboration and management of MPAs and the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity, accessible to partners and focal points.
- Develop a series of posts on social networks highlighting the achievements of the target "institutions", emphasizing the role of SPA/RAC in collective successes, <u>at least 6 times a year.</u>
- Circulate a questionnaire to partner institutional centres to measure the progress of SPA/RAC visibility. <u>All biennia.</u>
- Develop a press strategy based on two pillars:
  - o Creation of a network of press agencies and local journalists in Mediterranean countries, by Info/RAC and other UNEP/MAP biodiversity centres.
  - o Create a list of several magazines and newspapers interested in publishing portraits of researchers and outstanding biodiversity initiatives.
  - o Encourage centres to relay press releases to their local press networks

- **UNEP centres and biodiversity centres**: managers, coordinators and teams from conservation-related research centres.
- **Focal points and representatives from Mediterranean countries**: decision-makers and local institutions, relaying local actions.
- **Institutions and funders**: regional and international organizations, donors and financial partners.

> **Monitoring and evaluation:**
>
> - Track the number of joint projects developed and funded in collaboration with other centres.
> - Evaluate local impact by counting the number of success stories and feedback on best practices.
> - Measuring participation in the questionnaire
> - Measuring engagement with social network posts involving institutional topics

This strategic positioning will enable SPA/RAC to reinforce its position as a uniting leader in the protection of Mediterranean biodiversity, by building on the synergy of resources and communication that enhances the value of all the stakeholders involved.

Strategic axis 4: Strengthen the involvement of external partners

Strategic objective: Understand and respond to the specific needs of donors, sponsors, patrons and local and national elected representatives in the Mediterranean, in order to guarantee financial and institutional support for SPA/RAC's conservation actions.

Operational sub-objectives:

4A - Analysis of the needs of funders and financial backers:

- Maintain a strategic watch and identify and map the strategic priorities of current and potential donors (public and private) in the field of marine conservation:
  This task requires a dedicated resource and should be completed in the 2026-2027 biennium.
  Related action to be validated: announcement of the organization of a donor panel for UNOC 2025

- Create a process of active listening and feedback to adjust conservation actions to the specific expectations of sponsors, patrons and foundations.
  This task requires a dedicated resource and should be completed in the 2026-2027 biennium.

- Develop documents and reports tailored to funders' evaluation criteria, highlighting the impact of SPA/RAC actions.
  This task requires a dedicated resource and should be completed in the 2026-2027 biennium.

4B - Understanding the expectations of local and national elected officials:

- Organize dialogue sessions with elected representatives from Mediterranean countries to understand their expectations and specific needs in relation to marine conservation areas and conservation actions.
  This task requires a dedicated resource and should be completed in the 2026-2027 biennium.

- Establish a direct and transparent communication channel to provide relevant information to policymakers outside the focal points.
  This work can be carried out through a specific exchange between the centre's director, or project managers and political leaders, or through a newsletter dedicated to decision-makers, highlighting country-specific measures, measuring the impact of actions, how to promote them, and their interest for the countries concerned.

- Tailor communication actions to local and national priorities and create dedicated messages for elected representatives to promote the socio-economic benefits of SPA/RAC projects.
  This task is linked to measuring the local impact of actions, which will enable local socio-economic interests to be brought to the fore and enhanced through appropriate communication. Requires a dedicated resource and should be carried out in the 2026-2027 biennium.

4C - Strengthening links with partners:

- Organize brainstorming sessions, giving ourselves time for joint reflection before setting up programs, projects or other initiatives, to explore all possible collaborations.

- Develop online collaborative platforms similar to the SPAMI platform, where key people can access specific information such as: impact measurements, vulgarized reports, actions underway in the network, action in a target country, etc.
  This objective is linked to the development of an intranet such as a TEAMS Canal, practical for document sharing and a more direct exchange. Create specific channels for each partner and see what changes in practice this will create. This solution could be extended to the institutional target.

- Set up a financial partner recognition program to raise the profile of sponsors, donors and foundations involved in marine conservation.
  This objective ties in with the 40th anniversary success stories, which include a story about MAVA, explaining why foundations and other donors fund these conservation projects.

- Organize annual events dedicated to technical/scientific and financial partners to share the progress and results of conservation projects, thus fostering their long-term commitment. Example of a regional action plan partner initiative: https://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/doc_general/rap_partner_award_en.pdf
  Following the example of the above initiative, promote the contribution of SPA/RAC's financial and technical stakeholders at dedicated events, or at regional events, by allocating part of the time to speeches/testimonials/thank-you award.

Priority targets

- **Financial partners - Donors, sponsors and patrons**: international organizations, private foundations, companies and philanthropists interested in marine conservation projects.
- **Mediterranean: Local and national elected officials from Mediterranean countries**: representatives of governments and local authorities involved in the management of marine and coastal ecosystems.
- **Institutions:** entities working with SPA/RAC to implement environmental initiatives.
- **Scientific partners**

This strategy of involving external partners will enable SPA/RAC to establish sustainable financial support and obtain strong institutional backing, thus consolidating its mission of preserving marine biodiversity.

8. Internal organization and resources: human resources

Communications Manager

Operational communication, strategy, event management, transfer of knowledge on departure, professional networking, and the creation and launch of dedicated online platforms are all managed by communications assistant Dorra Maaoui, under the supervision of the centre director, with the support of project managers and the technical manager.

In view of the workload, the level of involvement, the autonomy and the quality of the work carried out, it seems essential to us to give due recognition to the position held, which is fully that of a "communications officer", and the benefits that go with the job. This title recognizes both the strategic place occupied by the subject of communication, and the work accomplished.

Human resources dedicated to network management

We also feel it is essential to recruit a second human resource dedicated to animating future networks through focal points and SPAMI managers, in order to reach the "Mediterranean" target group, while continuing with the general tasks assigned to the communications manager.

- **Number of meetings per year per test country**: 1/month
- **Number of SPAMI events**: 2 / month
- **Number of test countries in 2026**: 2
- **Number of test countries in 2027**: 6
- **Number of local actions/activities to be facilitated and promoted / country / year**: 4 (one per quarter) - to be adjusted following the test phase
- **Total time dedicated to network management**: one to two days a week.

External consultants

Ad-project costing - Outsourcing of communications on large-scale projects, where SPA/RAC is the communications coordinator, or where the coordinator is not appointed. Issue of a framework agreement-type contract to validate the skills of an agency and the average price of a service by type of scope, then response to demand for specific missions with issue of an estimate to be validated. As communication is recognized as a strategic axis for development and achieving conservation objectives, this service is included in the total project budget.

9. Operational plan

○ **List of actions**

To make the 2025 operational plan as easy to use as possible, we have created a complete online planner defining the major deadlines for:

a. content creation: prior to distribution, this involves dedicating time to the task of creating content, taking the time to think about the target audience, format and semantics.
b. events
c. campaigns
d. the website
e. printing

This evolving is available on SPA/RAC Teams Canal.

○ **First budget items**

Cost estimates for communication initiatives has been drawn up. This budget is for the year 2025 only and will be used to allocate available resources to priority actions.

It does not include human resources costs.

This budget is also available on SPA/RAC Teams Canal.

APPENDIX 1: RECOMMENDATIONS DIGITAL PLAN

In addition to the operational plan filled in directly on the Planner, here are some recommendations relating to the digital strategy

Recommendations specific to SPA/RAC social networks

Social networking

Enlist the support of a digital agency to develop your online presence, either on specific projects or on a year-round basis.

TO CONTINUE

Focus on the few networks with the most potential to reach SPA/RAC targets and those where it is already performing well and receiving the most interaction:

- LinkedIn: follow the general recommendations on post type and community development.
    - o Follow a strategy of "recruiting" subscribers by inviting SPA/RAC members to add partners to their private networks and by sharing SPA/RAC posts.
- Facebook: good feedback from the community. Identify several relevant groups in which the SPA/RAC can post its information. Monk seal example: look for local community groups in Mediterranean countries to increase reach.

TO LEAVE OUT

- X: little interaction, increasingly polarizing content that leaves less room for neutral, apolitical content in terms of audience. The amount of time to be invested in developing a substantial reach on X is significant, and given the time available, we recommend focusing on the two channels already used by SPA/RAC

- Instagram: PAP/RAC ran an effective campaign on Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/pap_rac/ with interactions of up to 500 likes on posts. Privileged format: short, easy-to-understand videos -> which requires time to create.
- Few reactions to posts with little added value
- Example of UNEP, major interaction, substantial budget for the creation of video materials.
- One possibility: use Instagram as a channel for popularizing SPA/RAC topics, as it mostly reaches a non-technical target audience.
- Enhance existing resources: publish excerpts from documentaries that have already been produced and carry the SPA/RAC message.
- Publish the 40 years illustrated story, try to favour animated content as much as possible, even if the animation is light.
- Making reel
- Have a crosspost strategy: find partners to collaborate with to increase audience reach
- Identify hashtags that promote the SPA/RAC in general (e.g. #biodiversity or #mediterranean), and identify hashtags that promote specific subjects (e.g. for the story with a Focal Point as part of the 40th anniversary: #lifestory and a post focusing on this can bring a lot of visibility to the subject).

READ MORE

General recommendations

A digital strategy is always based on reflection:

- what my goal is,
- who do I want to speak to?
- where my target audience gets their information,
- which channel is the most promising,
- to deliver a message to which they will be receptive

Finally, a very important point is: what are my partners and creators of similar content doing? For inspiration, understanding and evolution.

Creating added value in digital actions is essential to stand out in a tide of constant content creation.

Special cases & uses

The case of SPA/RAC is very particular, because, for a local target, you're aiming at more than 21 countries, and therefore 21 uses, networks and languages. It's important to make choices about the channels you use, to avoid drowning in actions that lack effectiveness because they're too numerous and not targeted enough.

Message

You need to make a post to follow up on a request, an event to announce, information to disseminate, here are the steps to follow:

- Who do I need to address: who is this information for, and what are the specific characteristics of this target to which I need to adapt my content?
- What are their expectations? This target group has its own agenda, and how does my information meet or echo it?
- If we had to retain just one idea from my message, what would it be?

Combine these three elements and you have your message.

Information channels

Facebook:

- a mixed professional and personal network, focused on creating communities around the same interests

LinkedIn:

- A professional, fairly neutral network dedicated to networking
- **Ideal for:** scientific content, institutional content, webinar announcements
- **Specificity:**
  - Hook: the success of a post depends on the way it is oriented. The more specific it is, starting with a question or a remark that arouses interest, the more successful it will be.
  - See more: the first two lines before the "see more" button are the most important.
  - Tag: tag people of interest who can relay the post, challenge them directly
  - Closing: end your post either by opening with a question that prompts discussion in the comments, or with a thought that invites you to consult

other content, or with a "call to action": subscribe, come and see our site, subscribe to...

- **Formats:**
  - Carousel: convey clear, easy-to-understand structured information highlighting the centre's expertise, easy to design on Canva.

    Examples: https://www.blogdumoderateur.com/comment-creer-carrousel-linkedin/

  - Vertical video: vertical format, available on mobile only

    https://www.leptidigital.fr/reseaux-sociaux/creer-videos-courtes-linkedin-64354/ - Ideal for making communication targets visible

  - Video: short format, video of less than 1 minute on a subject - ideal for talking about a complex subject in an educational way, highlighting a success story, etc.
  - Other classic formats: visual with text + post content, visual + post content

- **Community:** to increase our audience, systematize the addition of people by SPA/RAC members on their LinkedIn profiles, and invite them to "like" the page at events.

- **Evaluation**: imagine evaluations that go beyond simple audience metrics, and measure the ability to request an action from your community, such as: go to our site, sign up for our webinar, register...

Point of vigilance:

Facebook:

- A network built around communities, for a target of over-30s in France, varying by country
- **Ideal for:** content promoting the community, its specific topics and people
- **Specificity:**
  - Unsuitable for institutional formats, such as job offers, institutional announcements, etc.

- o Tag: tag people of interest who can relay the post, challenge them directly
- o Hashtag: allows you to link product content to other similar content to maximize the chances of reaching your target audience.

- **Format:**
  - o Photos: share photos of local actions
  - o Video: short format, video of less than 1 minute on a subject - Ideal for talking about a complex subject in an educational way, highlighting a success story, etc.
  - o Reel: Video teaser, very popular format

- **Community:** in order to gain a larger audience, and in line with the local strategy developed by SPA/RAC, consider posting in groups linked to SPA/RAC activities to develop the reach of certain posts on conservation actions.
  - ➔ On specific actions such as the best practices when encountering a monk seal

- **Evaluation**: classic audience measurements, comments to understand how messages are received, likes and shares to understand the reach of these messages.

X:

Not much interactivity, little knowledge of how this network works, works a lot on thread sharing and positioning yourself in a conversation thread.

Instagram:

- A network dedicated to highly visual and video content
- **Ideal for:** beautiful content promoting biodiversity, promoting "personalities" who can convey messages
- **Specificity:**
  - o Unsuitable for institutional formats, such as job offers, institutional announcements, etc.
  - o Unsuitable for static formats or complex information

- o Hashtag: allows you to link product content to other similar content to maximize the chances of reaching your target audience.

Here's some information on social networking trends:

- Hubspot social networking trends: **Download here**

Tag

An effective sharing strategy relies on identifying relays that can share the centre's communications, depending on the post's target.

Website

The website is currently being overhauled, with the aim of highlighting topical content and improving the interface design to attract interesting visitors and direct them to appropriate content.

SharePoint / Intranet / Teams

Consider using SharePoint to share content online, simply by uploading documents in an online folder.

Webinar

Webinars are the latest trend in the world of knowledge creation. It represents a simple way of transmitting knowledge without too much preparation, by bringing in experts who will explain the results of their studies.

Like all digital content, it must be adapted to the target audience you want to reach.

- Some resources on webinar organization: Planning a webinar: https://blog.hubspot.fr/marketing/etapes-strategie-webinar
- Improve your webinars: https://offers.hubspot.fr/webinar-attrayant-performant

APPENDIX 2: COMMUNICATION EVALUATION - INDICATORS

- From December 1ᵉʳ 2024: draw up an initial picture of social networks and the website.
- Review on December 1ᵉʳ 2025
- **Social networks:**
  - General assessment frequency: annual
  - On each network:
    - Number of visitors
    - The number of posts
    - The number of impressions
    - Interaction ratio: impressions / number of interactions (likes, shares, comments) -> LinkedIn and Facebook
- **Project evaluation** at the end of the project, based on indicators defined in advance, with the main thought in mind: what would have been the impact if I hadn't communicated?
  - UNOC (if participation confirmed):
    - SAPBIO: popularizing the objectives that affect all the themes we work on, promotion in particular at the UNOC and the 40th anniversary celebrations
    - Donor panel: specific indicators in the planner
  - 40th anniversary 20/05: success story
  - SPAMI Day - 15/04:
    - Evaluated result: event visibility to increase the number of event participants
    - Types of action / evaluation
      - webpage / number of visits
      - social network campaign / average reach of posts: average impression, average interaction - comparison of best and worst results (date, time, format, content, tag)
      - photo / video coverage
      - seminar and small-format meeting / informal qualitative measurement: perceived success of the event and achievement of objectives at the end of the meeting
      - webinar / quantitative measurement: number of participants, qualitative measurement: evaluation at the end of the webinar

- o media appearances / press review, qualitative measurement: terms used to describe the event and keywords, quantitative measurement: number of appearances
  - o Goodies
  - o signage and room dressing (for face-to-face events)
  - o Distribution of questionnaires

- **Website evaluation:**
  - o Result: a site that serves the strategic axes of communication

  - o Annual indicators: evolution of number of visits over one year, evolution of session duration, annual evaluation of Lighthouse score. Annual analysis of most-visited pages, annual evaluation of keywords referring to the site.

 - Event evaluation and brand awareness - circulate a questionnaire at the end of each event which evaluates:

  - o Technical relevance of content
  - o A general assessment of the organization
  - o How did you hear about this event?
  - o In a few words, how would you describe SPA/RAC's mission?

- **Annual assessment:**
  - o **Circulate a questionnaire once a year to focal points and other biodiversity centres:**
    - Are you aware of SPA/RAC's communications strategy?
    - What synergies can we develop together?
    - What information would you need from us to support you in your actions?
    - What improvements have you seen in our communication?

Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC)
Boulevard du Leader Yasser Arafat
B.P. 337- 1080 Tunis Cedex – Tunisia
car-asp@spa-rac.org
www.spa-rac.org